

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Democracy is endangered when the media are controlled by one point of view. That's why, in third-world countries, taking over the radio and television stations is one of the early steps in imposing a dictatorship.

It's absolutely critical to a democracy that citizens see and hear facts and opinions from many points of view. Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. If Sinclair chooses to abuse its responsibility to the public interest, its license should not be renewed. Thank you.